

Introduction

Social investment: a buzzword – but has it reached the stakeholders?

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Introduction

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Social investment has been a buzzword in political rhetoric over the last 10-15 years – and a substantial number of articles and books on the subject has emerged. In 2017 alone google scholar shows using social investment as search term 5070 elements. Naturally, they are not all dealing with social policy, and even less with long-term care for elderly persons. Social investment has been seen as a new way, sometimes even as part of the debate on the third way in welfare states development, and as a reaction to new public management and neo-liberal approaches to welfare states development.

Furthermore, the literature on social investment often have a focus on social services and activities where there might be possible long-term impact of an investment, for example, in relation to day-care for children. These long-term impacts might not always be the case if discerning effect of investment in long-term care. Stakeholders perception of and understanding of social investment is often not taken into consideration and analysed.

The articles in this themed section, based upon research in a Horizon 2020 project “SPRINT”, try to depict and investigate if and how stakeholders in different welfare states with very different approaches to long-term care knows about social investment. The countries under consideration is Denmark (Nordic), Portugal (Southern Europe) and Lithuania (Eastern Europe). They have different state emphasis on delivery of care and different traditions, although in all countries civil society is an important aspect in the daily support to and help to many elderlies.

The articles remarkably show that the concept of social investment as such is not known among stakeholders, which here consist of a broad group of institutions, actors and organisations, see the individual articles. However, when discussing different kinds of interventions and the way they might work, then they seem to understand what social investment actually is, and, also that this is something they support as a way to improve long-term care. Thereby, social investment without being known as such, the idea hereof is understood among those interested and involved in long-term care in very different welfare states. In this way ideas impact on welfare states development can also be confirmed.